



DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

Webinar on Food Waste measurement for Member States

Via Microsoft Teams

9 July 2021 – From 10:30 to 12:30

Chair: Bartosz Zambrzycki, Policy Officer, Food waste, Farm to fork strategy, European Commission

Commission: DG SANTE: Anne-Laure Gassin, Cristina Lisetchi, Alexis Mathioudakis, Vasiliki Boukouvala; **DG AGRI:** Natalia Brzezina, **DG ENV:** Silvija Aile; **ESTAT:** Cristina Re; **DG INTPA:** Hanns-Achim Krebs; **DG MARE:** Niall Gerlitz; **JRC:** Carla Caldeira, Valeria De Laurentiis, Laura Garcia Herrero.

European Environment Agency: Ioannis Bakas

Member States represented (17):

BE, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, IE, HR, HU, LT, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK.

Observers:

EFTA: Norway

Following the two webinars held in June and November 2020, the Commission organised a 3rd webinar on 9 July 2021 to support Member States in their [legal obligations](#) as regards measurement and reporting on national food waste levels. **Germany** and a **Nordic consortium** were invited to present work on food loss and waste measurement and reporting carried out at national level. The recording and presentations of the webinars are published on the [Commission's food waste measurement webpage](#).

1//. Experts from the Thünen-Institute, the Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety presented the outcomes of the [study conducted to measure food waste levels](#) in Germany, as well as the **steps taken to meet the European legal requirements** for monitoring and reporting [[ppt part 1](#) & [ppt part 2](#)].

The results of the study indicate that approximately 11.9 ± 2.4 million tonnes of food waste were generated in Germany in 2015 (baseline year). A combination of food waste measurement methods, which are in line with those proposed in the related EU legislation, were used across all sectors of

the food supply chain. The overall framework of the study is based on the [Champions 12.3 Target-Measure-Act approach](#). Households have the largest share (52 %) in the total amount of food waste generated in Germany.

The study provides a solid basis and **starting point** for the monitoring of food waste in Germany, especially in light of the EU legal requirements on food waste measurement. In the past years, Germany carried out work to close data gaps identified by the study and to complement the measurement methods used, in order to improve data quality and provide more detailed estimates on food waste amounts. To this end, the [national food waste avoidance strategy](#) launched in 2019 by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture facilitated the completion of new food waste measurement studies (through the [dialogue forums](#)), stimulated cooperation between actors of the entire food supply chain and spurred further action to raise awareness about food waste.

In terms of next steps, Germany will work on further improving data quality (e.g. through voluntary commitments of the food supply chain), and on agreeing on food waste reduction targets with relevant stakeholders of the food supply chain. Concerning the legal obligation to report to the EU on food waste levels in 2022, the challenge Germany faces is whether to apply a front-end approach (i.e. data from the production field: how much of the food produced ends up in the waste bin) or a back-end approach (i.e. data from waste statistics: share of food within total mixed waste). The decision was made to use a back-end approach, due to the availability of annual waste statistics reports. Data on the share of food waste within each waste flow likely to contain food waste is to be calculated on the basis of coefficients, established primarily on the basis of waste composition analysis. Next, in-depth measurement will be conducted in 2024, which will be the basis for further analysis on the methods to monitor food waste.

The Chair highlighted that the identification of the share of food waste within overall waste will eventually become an easier task after the implementation of mandatory separate collection of bio-waste as of 31 December 2023.

During the Q&A session, the [European Union's Statistical Office](#) (Eurostat) inquired whether Germany is collecting information on the **levels of edible and inedible food waste**. The expert from Germany explained that they do not focus on making this distinction, as it is not compulsory according to the EU's related Delegated Act and there is uncertainty regarding the added value of determining the amounts of edible/inedible food waste in achieving the [Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3](#). Eurostat prompted Germany to include, in their reporting to the EU, information on the coefficients of food waste for each waste flow, to which Germany responded positively.

The [European Commission's Joint Research Centre](#) (JRC) inquired whether **seasonal and geographic variability** (differences between urban and rural areas) will be taken into account in the definition of the food waste coefficients in mixed municipal waste. Germany indicated that this was indeed the case for the waste compositional analysis already conducted, while a similar approach will be followed for the analysis foreseen to take place in 2024.

Sweden was interested in receiving more information on the **practicalities and the characteristics of the waste compositional analyses** carried out in Germany. The expert from the Ministry explained that the cost of the last analysis was more than half a million euros and was covered by the German Federal Government. Further technical details on how the waste compositional analyses are conducted will be better addressed by relevant experts. The Chair recalled that best practices as well

as standards and guidelines for waste composition analysis are included in Eurostat's guidance document on food loss and waste measurement and reporting (c.f. page 30, under 'Standards and guidelines for waste composition analysis'). EUROSTAT outlined that the latest versions of the food waste measurement and reporting methodological documents can be found on [Eurostat's website](#).

2//. Experts from the Norwegian Institute for Sustainability Research NORSUS and Sweden's research institute RISE presented the results of a project carried out in all Nordic countries. The goal of the project was to **map the methodologies** applied to quantify food waste at national level (in all stages of the food supply chain), as well as to **assess the level of preparedness** of each Nordic country to meet the EU's legal requirements on food loss and waste monitoring and reporting [[ppt](#)].

Findings indicate that overall, there is a sound framework for food loss and waste measurement and reporting activities in all Nordic countries. The project also identified both similarities and differences in the approaches followed by each Nordic country to measure and report on its food waste levels. Denmark and Sweden follow a top-down approach which is aligned with the [EU Waste Framework Directive](#). On the other hand, Norway and Finland (in part) have adopted a bottom-up approach which focuses on pinpointing opportunities for food waste prevention and which bases data collection on voluntary reporting. Speakers concluded that **all Nordic countries can meet the EU legal requirements** on food loss and waste monitoring and reporting, provided that a number of necessary adjustments take place (e.g. Norway counts food used as animal feed as food waste and excludes non-edible food in food waste quantification).

In addition, according to the findings of the project, sample representativeness should be improved for some stages of the food supply chain, while further research is required to evaluate the cost differences among the various measurement methods. The [report of the project](#) provides a summary of the conclusions and it includes **recommendations** to the Nordic Council of Ministers for measures and methods to reduce food loss and waste. After the completion of this project, further action was taken in the Nordic countries that will eventually lead to new data (e.g. voluntary agreements in Sweden ([SAMS](#)) and Denmark ([ONE\THIRD](#)) aiming to set food loss and waste reduction targets and contribute to data reporting). The experts finally referred to the available [report](#) that compiles information on Norwegian food waste data from 2015 to 2019.

In reply to Denmark's question on the **coordination of data collection** and the organisation of information flows among Nordic countries during the project, the speakers explained that national representatives from each Nordic country were designated to participate in this exercise, while various stakeholders were also invited to provide input. The report of the project was circulated to all project partners for the validation of its observations and conclusions, before its final publication.

On the topic of data collection, the experts from Norsus and RISE pointed out that a digital system was developed for stakeholders to provide input on their food loss and waste data. Germany was interested to know more about the experience with **online tools for the collection of data** within the framework of the project, especially from companies and municipalities. The project leaders explained that in Norway, an online process was put in place 3-4 years ago to facilitate the reporting of some types of data. The portal was welcomed by companies, which could submit their reports throughout the year, in an organised and simplified way, while trusting the system to safeguard the confidentiality of the data submitted. A similar data collection system is also implemented in Finland and is under development in Sweden. Norway is working on improving the features and operability of this online portal.

The speakers also addressed Germany's inquiry on the measurement of **liquid food waste** explaining that this is not assessed in Norway. However, there are available data on beverage waste from the food industry. In contrast, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency recently published a [study](#) on food and drink poured down the drain in Swedish households in 2021. Data from this study, as well as information on edible and inedible food waste (depending on whether the data quality is satisfactory), might be included in Sweden's mandatory reporting to the EU.

In reply to Germany's last question on the types of waste sorting methodologies in the Nordic countries, the speakers underlined that Nordic countries will continue to work closely to exchange updated information and recent developments regarding the implementation of the various methods. It is important to note that, although there are opportunities to harmonise these methodologies, it is not yet clear whether the development of a **uniform common methodology** to be followed by all Nordic countries is the best way forward, as each country has its own specificities.

3//. At the end of the webinar, the Commission updated participants on food waste measurement activities at EU level [[ppt](#)]. As regards future meetings, the Commission announced that a **4th webinar on food waste measurement** or a **meeting of the Platform's sub-group on food waste measurement** is tentatively planned for September/October 2021, subject to the availability of speakers. Member States willing to share their experience with food waste measurement activities in their countries are encouraged to get in touch with the [Platform's Secretariat](#). The Commission recalled that work foreseen in the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) for establishing EU level targets for food waste prevention by end 2023 is underway and announced that the related **inception impact assessment (IIA)** will be launched in autumn 2021. Following its publication, a dedicated meeting will be organised, to present the IIA to the Platform and gather members' feedback. Finally, the **last plenary meeting under the Platform's current mandate** is foreseen for 18 November 2021 (more information will follow in due time).

As regards grants on food waste prevention and reduction, the Commission informed participants about the adoption of the [Single Market Programme](#) (SMP) and the [Horizon Europe Work Programme 2021-2022](#). As part of the SMP, **grants will be proposed to help Member States improve food waste measurement activities** at national level. Member States will have 2 months at their disposal to submit their calls for proposals, while the grants will be assigned as of 2022 (provisional information). SMP grants will also be proposed to civil society actors to support them to implement food waste prevention activities within their operations. In reply to Germany's question regarding the final beneficiaries of the grants within each Member State, the Commission explained that these should be competent national authorities. The Commission encouraged interested stakeholders to find more information on the grants in the [respective financial decision publication](#) and submit their questions to the Commission.

Two calls related to food loss and waste prevention and reduction are covered under the Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe's main work programme for the period 2021-22. The Commission invited participants to spread the word within their networks on the first call for proposals from interested stakeholders to [support evidence-based decision-making to change social norms towards zero food waste](#) (already open since June 2021, deadline 6 October 2021). In the context of the second call, the Commission seeks **proposals for research and innovation initiatives for food loss and waste prevention and reduction through harmonised measurement and monitoring** (call will open in October 2021, deadline February 2022). In July 2021, the Commission organised info days to present

the calls offered under Horizon Europe's Cluster 6. Recordings of the various sessions are published on the [dedicated webpage](#), while stakeholders' questions are welcome via the [research enquiry service](#) tool.

Finally, in regard to the EU legal obligations on food loss and waste monitoring and reporting, Eurostat reminded Member States of the deadline (30 June 2022) for the first mandatory reporting for the reference year 2020. Eurostat also renewed the invitation to Member States to participate in the voluntary reporting exercise, as this enables Member States to familiarize themselves with the reporting procedure, and it also allows the Commission to **identify gaps** in the legislation and **improve the related guidance** (c.f. [report](#) by JRC on a set of coefficients for estimating food waste levels for all MS and [guidance](#) on reporting of data on food waste and food waste prevention by Eurostat - a new version of this guidance is expected to be published in September 2021).